

## How to contact the Native Community Branch

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Staff in Toronto provide research support to the field, work directly with provincial organizations and liaise with other federal and provincial departments, ministries and agencies. Toronto staff consist of the Director of the Native Community Branch, and five consultants in the areas of Native culture, government research, Native provincial organizations, social policy development and grants and program analysis.

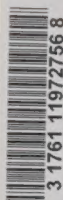
# Native Community Branch

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## Who we are

The Native Community Branch is a consultative agency which works with Native communities and organizations. The branch's goal is to assist those communities and organizations in their efforts to encourage Native self reliance and participation in the life of the province. In promoting this goal, the branch has identified the following objectives.

## Objectives of the Native Community Branch

1. To support Native heritage preservation and cultural continuity;
2. To promote the development of human resources and leadership in the Native community;
3. To assist Native communities in socio-economic development;
4. To facilitate direct Native access to government services and resources.

## Why the Native Community Branch?

The branch's role flows from both its historical development and from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation Act. The Ministry of Culture and Recreation Act, Section 8(a) states that the minister shall . . . "in the cause of human betterment, advance and encourage the concept of full and equal citizenship . . .". Further, Section 6(1) of the Act states that the ministry is to advance and encourage responsible citizenship, including the preserving of the cultural heritage of Ontario residents, with full recognition of their diverse traditions and backgrounds.

Native people are therefore being offered assistance, because for a variety of historical reasons, full and equal citizenship with other residents of Ontario has not been achieved to date.

## What does the Native Community Branch do?

Programs of the branch include consultative assistance, research and information bank, publications, policy advisory services, and grants.

### Consultative assistance to Native communities

Help through consultation is provided to Metis communities, Friendship Centres, the Native Women's Association, Indian Bands, Native cultural and communications groups and other local Native groups by the branch's Community Resource Officers throughout Ontario. Provincial Native organizations have recourse to Toronto consultants. Consultation services include:

- assisting Native communities in identifying local problems and in developing appropriate projects or programs;
- advising Native communities and organizations of services or programs which could help their development, and assisting them in securing resources necessary to conduct community development projects;
- linking up Native communities and organizations with the appropriate provincial ministries and agencies, and obtaining the services of specialists available from these ministries when required;
- providing assistance to Native leaders on the preparation and submission of proposals to government, and advising how to evaluate existing and new projects.

### Research and information

The Branch is currently developing an information and research bank on Native people. Research studies and information are being gathered and organized in the areas of demographic data, social and economic conditions, Native organizations and communities, experimental or pilot projects throughout Canada, other provincial policies and programs for Native people, and Native position papers. The major objectives of the bank are:

- to provide provincial ministries and agencies with specific and accurate information regarding Ontario's Native people;

- to make available to Native organizations and communities information and research that may be valuable to them;

- to improve the branch's own information base for planning its future activities and setting priorities.

#### **Publications**

Branch publications are being developed in order to promote a better knowledge of Native people and their organizations throughout Ontario and to increase Native people's awareness of the Ontario government and the services and programs which it offers. These publications will include: 1. Provincial and Regional Native organizations in Ontario; 2. Directory of Native groups and communities; 3. Fact sheets on Ontario's Native people; 4. Community profile study; 5. Native Community Branch Program Report; 6. Native Affairs in Ontario.

### **Policy advisory services**

The branch, because of its unique field presence and its close working relationship with Native organizations, provides information and consultation to provincial ministries and agencies on policies or programs related to Native people.

Policy analysis and advice are provided through the ministry's participation on the Advisory Committee on Native Affairs and through participation on interministry committees or working groups addressing specific issues.

While the policy analysis and development role is important, the branch also aims at facilitating direct communication between Native organizations and the relevant provincial ministries in the resolution of policy or program issues.

#### **Native community grants**

The branch has a transfer payment program designed to assist Native communities and organizations in meeting priorities and objectives as identified by them. Projects must promote the branch's goals and meet the grant conditions and criteria. The grant program provides assistance to a wide variety of project areas.

**Provincial Organization Support** Financial assistance is provided to a limited number of provincial Native organizations to cover their basic administrative costs. Eligible organizations must be provincial Native organizations with a demonstrated membership throughout the province and their mandate must concur with the objectives and priorities of the Native Community Branch.

**Small Business Development** Limited financial support is available to support Native organizations and communities in the development of viable business enterprises. Priority is given to feasibility studies and studies of the economic potential of communities. Funding is also available for initial start-up costs of small Native businesses. Grants are limited to \$25,000 per project, and contributions from the applicant are a condition of the grant.

**Social Development** Projects which are undertaken by Native people to address particular social problems may be considered for support. Priority is given to special innovative or pilot projects, and these will be approved only after consultation with the line ministry responsible. Funding will be considered in exceptional cases for social programs which are not supported by relevant line ministries.

**Leadership Training** Funds are available to Native communities and organizations concerned with the development of leadership potential among Native people. Support will also be provided for projects providing skill training to Native people. Examples of eligible projects include staff training sessions, leadership-training seminars, educational programs and employment projects providing skill training and development.

**Research** Projects undertaken by Native people dealing with areas of original research will be considered for support. Priority will be given to demographic research and community needs documentation. Consideration will also be given to Native organizations working to undertake detailed research designs.

**Communications** Native initiated projects on media, ranging from radio, VTR and television to printed and visual materials will be considered. Projects should support community and leadership development through improved communications within the Native community, and through general public education.

**Native Heritage** Projects of an innovative nature that support community and leadership development through cultural activities will be considered. Eligible projects include heritage preservation, crafts and intercultural understanding, the visual and performing arts, and language conservation.

**Meeting Fund** Funds are available for Native groups to gather and discuss issues of common concern. Priority is given to meetings of Native groups at the regional and local level. Eligible projects range from internal Native organizational meetings and meetings between Native groups and the provincial government to special meetings around specific issues.

## **Ontario's Native people**

#### **Native people on reserves**

There are 66,057 registered status Indians in Ontario, but statistics<sup>1</sup> indicate that only 41,890, or 63 per cent, live on reserves and are governed by a local Band Council. These Bands are represented by a number of treaty organizations such as the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Grand Council Treaty No. 3, Grand Council Treaty No. 9, and Union of Ontario Indians. Some bands are not affiliated with any major treaty organizations. The Ontario Native Women's Association represents the interests of Native women who live on and off reserves.

#### **Native people off reserves**

Approximately 24,167<sup>2</sup> or 37 per cent of Ontario's status Indians and an estimated 185,000<sup>3</sup> non-status Indians and Metis live off reserve in rural and urban communities. They are served by a number of local Native organizations such as Indian Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women Anishnabeque Locals and Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Locals.

These local organizations in turn are represented by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association, and the Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association.

The Native Community Branch is assuming increased responsibility for assisting the roughly 209,167 Native people off reserve.

1. Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Registered Indian Population by Sex and Residence 1977*, Ottawa, 1978

2. Ibid

3. Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association Estimate 1977.